

Poulton-le-Fylde St Chad's CofE Primary School

Address: Hardhorn Road, Poulton-le-Fylde, Lancashire, FY6 7SR

Unique reference number (URN): 119556

Inspection report: 21 April 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	●
Expected standard	● ● ● ● ● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✓ Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

A thoughtful programme to promote pupils' personal development and wellbeing sits at the heart of school life. The curriculums for personal, social, health and economic education and relationships education are well designed and shaped to meet pupils' needs. This includes disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils learn how to stay safe, build healthy relationships and understand the world around them. For example, they learn about loss and bereavement and local risks such as the nearby waterway and railway. In the early years, children take part in activities that build their personal, social and emotional development.

Older pupils discuss topics such as democracy and social change with confidence, drawing on their secure understanding of fundamental British values and growing awareness of diversity.

A wide range of opportunities are offered to pupils. These broaden their experiences, deepening their understanding of the community and wider world. Pupils visit museums and different places of worship. They participate in sporting competitions and creative events such as visiting a pantomime at the theatre or participating in 'St Chad's at the opera'. Year 6 eagerly look forward to their residential visit where they develop their team building skills and confidence. There is an extensive range of clubs including yoga, choir, African drumming, chess, cheerleading, cricket and golf. Staff keep track of pupils' participation in these activities to ensure that disadvantaged pupils participate and benefit from all that is on offer.

Pupils take pride in their leadership roles in sustainability, worship and as behaviour champions. They contribute to community projects, such as fundraising or environmental work. These roles build pupil's self-esteem, social skills, resilience and independence. As a result, pupils are ready for life beyond school.

Expected standard ●

Achievement

Expected standard ●

The school has high aspirations for pupils' achievement, including pupils who are disadvantaged, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are known to social care. Pupils build important knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics securely over time. Staff provide effective support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND. They make steady progress from their different starting points.

Children start well in the early years. This continues into Year 1. Pupils confidently build the phonics knowledge they need to become fluent and accurate readers by the end of key stage 1.

By the end of Year 6, pupils, including those that are disadvantaged, typically achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. This is reflected in the school's published test results, which are similar to the national average. By the end of key stage 2, pupils are well prepared for secondary school.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders maintain a consistent focus on pupils' behaviour and attendance. This is underpinned by a clear culture of care, high expectations and inclusion. The school's nurturing ethos, supported by sensitive pastoral care, means that pupils feel safe and comfortable in school. This contributes to attendance and persistent absence rates that are similar to national averages over time. Leaders monitor attendance closely in most cases. When systems work well, staff identify patterns of absence quickly. This early identification allows leaders to act promptly and work effectively with families and external services. This approach has worked particularly well for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, many of whom now attend school regularly. However, it has been slightly less effective for a small number of disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils are well mannered. They follow routines confidently and show respect for others in lessons and social times. Classrooms have a lively atmosphere, with pupils actively involved in their learning. Pupils play well together. Older pupils show great care for their younger peers, holding their hands, chatting and playing with them at breaktimes. Pupils say they feel safe from bullying, which they report is only occasional. They trust staff to quickly and effectively deal with any issues they cannot resolve themselves.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have created an ambitious, well-ordered and inclusive curriculum that helps pupils build secure knowledge and skills from their starting points. Across subjects, leaders have high expectations for pupils. They make thoughtful adjustments where needed. This ensures pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantaged pupils and those known to social care, learn the same curriculum as their peers.

Teachers have a sound knowledge of all subjects and explain new ideas clearly. They use effective strategies to help pupils remember key learning. Pupils show clear knowledge and understanding as a result. For example, they use their mathematical knowledge to solve problems and apply phonics learning with confidence when reading. Pupils who struggle, for example in their reading, are well supported to quickly catch up with their peers and to read confidently and fluently.

Teachers' enthusiasm motivates pupils to engage eagerly in their activities. Regular checks on learning help teachers spot gaps in pupils' understanding and adapt their teaching to fill them.

Leaders are successful at ensuring that pupils learn the foundations for future learning well. However, some pupils' handwriting lacks accuracy and fluency. Teachers apply handwriting

expectations inconsistently, especially for letter and number formation. This inconsistency sometimes limits pupils' ability to write fluently.

Early years

Expected standard 

A warm, purposeful and nurturing early years environment encourages children to settle quickly and confidently. The curriculum is well designed and carefully organised. Staff's teaching and purposeful interactions ensure children get many opportunities to develop their communication and language skills. They do this through modelling and the use of imaginative play. For example, inspectors saw staff confidently guide children to make decisions and work cooperatively with their friends to build a monster truck. Indoor and outdoor activities offer abundant opportunities to support children's development in areas such as early mathematics, reading, writing and physical development.

Staff use their knowledge of early reading effectively. Children delight in sharing picture books with staff and with their friends. Many learn letters and their sounds with ease. They do this through well-crafted activities.

Staff have positive relationships with Reception class parents and carers. This enables them to build a secure understanding of children's starting points. When needed, staff adapt provision thoughtfully, particularly for those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who are disadvantaged.

Staff prioritise children's personal, social and emotional development which ensures that children feel safe, secure and happy. As a result, children thrive socially, emotionally and academically and are well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders rightly take pride in fostering an inclusive school culture. There are high expectations for all pupils. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who are known to social care or have other barriers to their learning. Pupils' individual needs are identified appropriately. Well-chosen support successfully reduces pupils' barriers to learning. For example, swift identification of communication needs in the early years supports children's wellbeing and readiness to learn.

Staff's training is typically effective. This ensures consistently inclusive practice across the school. For instance, staff are well trained to adapt activities and resources to suit pupils' needs. Systems for overseeing the progress of pupils with SEND are effective and well established. However, work to design similar systems to support pupils with other barriers, including those who are disadvantaged, is more recent. While this work is improving, it is not yet refined enough to give leaders full assurance that no gaps remain.

The pupil premium strategy is thoughtfully designed. It enables disadvantaged pupils to access the curriculum. It also offers them the chance to enjoy wider experiences such as clubs and trips and targeted pastoral support. This work successfully reduces their barriers to learning. As a result, these pupils are fully involved in their learning.

The school has been through considerable upheaval since the previous inspection. There have been a number of staff changes. However, leaders have established a stable, committed staff team. There are firm foundations from which the school can confidently thrive.

Leaders have created an ambitious, caring and inclusive culture that enables pupils to grow academically and in their personal development. This includes for pupils who are disadvantaged, those known to children's social care and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils' best interests are at the heart of all that leaders do.

Leaders provide staff with a positive programme of professional learning. Staff describe a culture of trust, open communication and sense of teamwork across the school. Morale is high and wellbeing is a priority. Staff value the care and support they receive from leaders to manage their workload and wellbeing. For example, leaders give staff dedicated time to carry out their responsibilities, which they appreciate greatly. Staff take pride in their work and are proud to be members of school.

Leaders know their school well. Their reflective approach ensures that they are continually seeking ways to improve the school. Leaders engage with the wider school community appropriately.

Governors show a clear commitment to the school. They provide professional support while also appropriately challenging leaders and holding them to account. This includes overseeing outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and those known to social care. Governors take an active role in shaping the school's culture and high expectations for pupils' achievement.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils at Poulton-le-Fylde St Chad's are proud of their school. They know that they are at the heart of all that the school does. From the moment they are welcomed into school they feel cared for and included. Older pupils take pride in supporting younger ones. Pupils organise their own charity events and model kindness through all their interactions with each other and the local community. Pupils talk confidently about the school's values and how these influence their relationships with their peers and adults. They enjoy taking part in the wide range of extra-curricular clubs, from sports to music, which help them to build friendships beyond their own classmates. Staff know pupils well and nurture positive, respectful relationships with them. Staff ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who face other barriers to learning are fully included in all that the school has to offer.

Pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers build pupils' knowledge securely over time. Pupils are proud of their achievements. They develop secure knowledge across the curriculum. For example, pupils are eager to share their confident reading skills. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Pupils behave well and show great respect for one another. They move calmly around school. They listen in lessons attentively and with enthusiasm. Pupils say they feel safe because adults act quickly if they have any worries. They rightly trust staff to deal with any unkind behaviour or bullying. Most pupils are eager to come to school. Those that struggle to attend school every day are supported to improve. Pupils learn how to contribute positively to their community, for example through their 'St Chad's in bloom' project.

Next steps

- Leaders should strengthen the teaching of handwriting across the school so that pupils develop their legibility, accuracy and fluency in writing.
 - Leaders should refine their oversight of pupils who have additional barriers to learning so that it is comparable with what is in place for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
 - Leaders should continue improve the attendance of the small group of disadvantaged pupils by building on the success they have had for other pupils.
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About this inspection

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.

The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the diocese.

Inspectors also took account of the views of pupils, parents and carers.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Church of England religious character. The school's last section 48 inspection was in March 2026.

The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Nicole Bitsakaki

Lead inspector:

Sue Eastwood, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Katie Hague, Ofsted Inspector

Amanda Whittingham, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 21 April 2026

School and pupil context**Total pupils**

237

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

245

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

9.70%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.95%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

9.28%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Close to average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	60%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	68%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	60%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	53%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	81%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	88%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	80%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	75%	73%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	72%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	79%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	74%	72%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	64%	71%	Below

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	75%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	76%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	77%	73%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	72%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	39%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	50%	47%	Close to average

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24 (final)	43%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	78%	62%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	100%	63%	Above
2023/24 (final)	86%	62%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	61%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	59%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	86%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	50%	60%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	67%	61%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	57%	59%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	39%	68%	-29 pp
2024/25 (revised)	50%	69%	-19 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	67%	-25 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	78%	80%	-2 pp
2024/25 (revised)	100%	81%	19 pp
2023/24 (final)	86%	80%	6 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	61%	78%	-17 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	78%	-12 pp
2023/24 (final)	86%	78%	8 pp
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	50%	80%	-30 pp
2024/25 (revised)	67%	81%	-14 pp
2023/24 (final)	57%	79%	-22 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	4.3%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.5%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.4%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	7.9%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	7.6%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	11.4%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional 

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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